



Department of Justice

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21 INDICTED IN COCAINE TRAFFICKING CONSPIRACY

PRESS RELEASE

NEW ALBANY, Ind. - The indictment of 21 alleged cocaine traffickers was unsealed yesterday in U.S. District Court in New Albany, following the arrest of 17 of the defendants. Federal, state, and local law enforcement officers also served 16 search warrants (eight in Indiana, seven in Kentucky and one in Illinois). Seized during the execution of the search and arrest warrants were approximately 10 ounces of cocaine, \$82,000 in cash and 30 firearms, including two AR-15's. This indictment was the result of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, the Indiana State Police, the Jeffersonville, Indiana Police Department and the Charlestown, Indiana Police Department.

In addition to the agencies named above, the following agencies assisted in the arrests and searches today: Chicago FBI, Clark County Sheriff's Department, Clarksville Police Department, Floyd County Sheriff's Department, Illinois State Police, Indianapolis FBI Safe Streets Gang Task Force, Louisville FBI, Louisville Metro Police Department, New Albany Police Department, Scottsburg Police Department, Seymour Police Department and the U.S. Marshals Service.

On September 20, 2010, a grand jury returned an indictment against 21 individuals for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribution of cocaine. These persons have been arrested:

Jesse K. Bottoms, Sr., age 46, Sellersburg, Ind.;
Wess C. Nelson, age 45, Glen Ellyn, Ill.;
Russell L. Embry, Sr., age 45, Clarksville, Ind.;
Antoine C. Allen, age 26, Louisville, Ky.;
Scott Sipes, age 58, Louisville, Ky.;
Calvin L. Green, age 38, Jeffersonville, Ind.;
Mario Holbrook, age 49, Louisville, Ky.;
Marshaun L. Long, age 36, New Albany, Ind.;

Johnathon E. Rickards, age 39, New Albany, Ind.;
John Minor, age 33, Louisville, Ky.;
Ralph T. Minor, age 31, Louisville, Ky.;
Warren A. Garbrough, age 44, Clarksville, Ind.;
Mike A. Helm, Jr., age 31, Louisville, Ky.;
Gerrard W. Bass, age 30, Louisville, Ky.;
Nia Bottoms, age 44, Sellersburg, Ind.,
Amber N. Tucker, age 22, Clarksville, Ind.;
Jesse K. Bottoms, Jr., age 21, Sellersburg, Ind.

The remaining four indicted persons have yet to be taken into custody.

All but three of the defendants were charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute five kilograms or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine. Nia Bottoms and Amber Tucker were charged only with one count of knowingly and intentionally using a communication facility to facilitate the commission of an act constituting a felony. Jesse Bottoms, Jr. was charged only with one count of transferring a firearm, knowing that the firearm would be used in a drug trafficking crime.

The indictment alleges that since July 2008, Jesse Bottoms, Sr. was the leader of the conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and distribution of cocaine. As the leader, the indictment alleges Bottoms was responsible for acquiring large quantities of cocaine from his sources and then providing cocaine to mid-level cocaine distributors in southern Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky. These sources include co-defendant Wess C. Nelson.

The indictment further alleges that bulk quantities of cocaine and cash were maintained at "stash" houses in Louisville, Kentucky, and, in order to protect their money and drugs, conspirators possessed assault rifles, shotguns and pistols.

Michael Welch, Special Agent in Charge of the Indianapolis Federal Bureau of Investigation said: "The success of this investigation is an example of the outstanding cooperation between local, state and federal law enforcement."

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Josh J. Minkler, who is prosecuting the case for the government, each defendant charged with conspiracy to distribute and to distribute cocaine faces a maximum of life imprisonment, and a \$4,000,000 fine. Both Nia Bottoms and Amber Tucker, who were charged with using a communication facility to facilitate the commission of an act constituting a felony, face a maximum of four years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Jesse Bottoms, Jr., charged with transferring a firearm, knowing that the firearm would be used in a drug trafficking crime, faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Initial hearings began at 11:30 a.m. yesterday for those arrested in New Albany before Magistrate Judge Michael Naville. These hearings continue this morning.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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